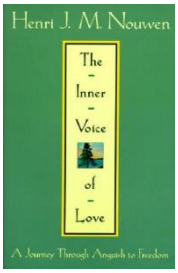

The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom

By Henri J.M. Nouwen

Pages 99-113

Opening Prayer:

Loving God,
In the midst of our struggles, you speak a quiet word of hope.
Help us to listen to your voice — the voice that calls us beloved.
In our brokenness and in our strength, may we hear the truth that sets us free.
We open our hearts to you in this time together.
Amen.

Sharing prompts:

1. **Let God Speak Through You** (p. 99)
   When have you allowed God to speak words of forgiveness, healing, or reconciliation through you?
   When have you felt God calling you to obedience, commitment, or service?
2. **Know That You Are Welcome** (p. 101)
   Describe a time when you said "no" to the Prince of Darkness and "yes" to the voice of welcome—God's invitation to love, light, and belonging.
3. **Permit *Your* Pain to Become *The* Pain** (p. 103)
   Nouwen suggests we must be in solidarity with those in pain.
   How have you experienced solidarity with others in suffering?
   Have you allowed your pain to become a bridge to compassion?
4. **Give Your Agenda to God** (p. 105)
   How do you surrender your plans, expectations, or attachments to God?
   What helps you release control and trust in God's will?
5. **Let Others Help You Die** (p. 107)
   Describe an experience of "safe love"—love that allowed you to be vulnerable, to let go, or to be held in your weakness.
6. Live Your Wounds Through (p. 109)
   Do you experience your wounds more in your heart (emotion) or in your head (thoughts and stories)?
   How do you let God enter those wounds?

7. **For Now, Hide Your Treasure** (p. 111)
   What treasures do you hold dear—talents, insights, relationships, dreams?
   Do you ever find yourself valuing them more than God, or are they drawing you closer to God?
8. **Keep Choosing God** (p. 113)
   When do you listen to God's whisper:
   "I want to give you a new heart and a new spirit. I want you to speak with my mouth, see with my eyes, hear with my ears, touch with my hands. All that is mine is yours. Just trust me and let me be your God"?
   Who has God sent into your life to help you remember this?

Farwell and Closing Prayer:

- Invite everyone to share the one word or phrase they would like to take into the next week/month (depending how often you are meeting).
- Close with the Serenity Prayer ... *God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. Amen*